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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 17 November 1995 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a statement issued on 10 November 1995 by the White House, on behalf of President Clinton, regarding the executions on 10 November 1995 of nine environmental and human rights activists in Nigeria (see annex). The trial, sentencing and execution of these activists without benefit of due process of law demonstrates the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in Nigeria. If this trend continues, the tension and instability within Nigeria could have an effect on the peace and security of the entire region.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 112 (b), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Madeleine K. ALBRIGHT

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ANNEX

Statement by the Press Secretary on 10 November 1995

The United States strongly condemns the execution today of environmental and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others accused of murder in May 1994. These executions demonstrate to the world the Abacha regime's flaunting of even the most basic international norms and universal standards of human rights.

Mr. Saro-Wiwa was a champion of the rights of his fellow Ogoni people and a world leader in the struggle to preserve our environment. He was a distinguished author, an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience and the recipient of many international awards. The United States extends its sincere condolences to the families of those executed. Their deaths will be mourned around the world.

The United States deplores the gravely flawed process by which Mr. Saro Wiwa and his associates were convicted and executed. They were condemned outside the traditional judicial system and without regard for due process. This latest action follows the 1 October announcement by the Government of Nigeria of a transition to democracy that lacks credibility. In addition, we have strongly condemned the imposition of harsh sentences last month on the alleged coup plotters. In that case, a secret trial also denied the defendants due process.

In response to these actions, President Clinton has decided:

To recall Ambassador Carrington from Lagos for consultations;

To protest the executions to the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, Zubair Mahmud Kazaure;

To ban the sale and repair of military goods and services to Nigeria;

To extend our ban on visas, which currently prohibits the entry into the United States of senior military officers and senior government officials and their families, to include also all military officers and civilians who actively formulate, implement or benefit from the policies that impede Nigeria's transition to democracy;

To ask his Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, to begin consultations immediately on appropriate United Nations measures to condemn these actions; and

Henceforth, to require Nigerian government officials visiting the United Nations or the international financial institutions to remain within 25 miles of those organizations;

We will continue to oppose International Monetary Fund loans and credits and debt relief for Nigeria.

The United States reiterates its call on the Nigerian leadership to speed the transition to democracy starting by releasing all political detainees immediately and unconditionally. We again urge the Nigerian Government to take bold, credible steps to restore Nigeria promptly to civilian democratic rule, and will keep additional measures under review.